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ABSTRACT

A synthesis of the research on educational improvement programs of the 60s and 70s provides the framework for this paper. Restructured schools featured the use of team teaching and shared decision making, and changes in curriculum content and delivery. Problem areas centered on role-related issues, ambiguous means of implementation, and lack of fit between context and innovation. Santanya argued that knowledge gained from the past must be used to avoid repetition of the same mistakes. A review of reform efforts must therefore consider the different social, economic, and intellectual roots of the past and present situations to avoid misapplying the lessons. An understanding of the context in which restructuring occurred is necessary. Factors crucial for restructuring success are: (1) an understanding of the roles and knowledge needed; (2) a clear organizational structure; and (3) a balance between content and context. (7 references) (LMI)

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SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING:

SANTANYA'S WARNING

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This paper is an effort to synthesize the research on educational improvement programs that were implemented in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the language of the time did not include the word, the programs under scrutiny all represent "restructuring" efforts and share some characteristics with current restructuring efforts. Not all reform and innovation efforts of the earlier period can be called "restructuring" efforts. For example, the revision of the science curriculum sponsored by the National Science Foundation did little to alter school structures (although one might argue that they might have been better served by doing so!) But there were efforts that did adjust "rules, roles, and relationships" (Schleclhty, 1988).

The synthesis was originally developed for two reasons. First, the a-historical nature of many cries for deep reform of the American educational enterprise raised the specter of Santanya, who warned that "those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Second, the current restructuring movement involves decentralizing decision making. Such decentralization requires widespread understanding of what is required for successful school change.

The paper is organized as follows. First, there is a discussion of the problem addressed by the paper. That is followed by an overview of the findings of the studies from the 1960s and 1970s. After that is an analysis of the historical and contextual differences between the earlier efforts and those that are currently being implemented. Finally, implications of the past within the current context are presented.

The Problem

During the 1960s and 1970s there were numerous efforts to improve schools through fundamental change. Some of these efforts originated with the Federal government (e.g., the Rural Experimental Schools program) and others with local decision makers (e.g., the Kensington school). In either case, they were attempts to improve schools by making them more human, humane, responsive to their clientele, and exciting. In short, the schools would become places in which students were learning critical thinking and interpersonal skills, and professional staff were committed to and involved in ensuring that the schools were (to use a phrase from a different field) "all that they could be." By and large, the yield from the efforts was disappointing. Few programs were successfully implemented as planned, most had few if any effects on students, and teachers and administrators became disillusioned.

This section describes key elements of the "restructuring" efforts from the earlier era and compares them with elements from the current wave of rhetoric and reality of restructuring. At both times, the efforts were diverse, stemming from different analyses of what was problematic in American education and different views of what would fix it. Despite the diversity, there were common elements--and there are elements that are common across the two eras. Further, the elements that are common are, in fact, those about which there is important knowledge from the past to be used in the present.

In preparing the synthesis, research was gathered about the following programs:

Rural Experimental Schools
The Ford Foundation "Lighthouse" Schools
Individually Guided Instruction
School-based Innovations (the Cambria school and the Kensington school)

Organizational Innovations (team teaching)

All of these innovations addressed what was seen as problems in current education. For example, the Rural Experimental Schools program was based on a view that rural students were not receiving as good an education as their suburban counterparts. Further, most Federal funding for disadvantaged students and educational improvement was going to urban areas. Finally, improving rural schools would require alterations in fundamental properties of school, including the curriculum and the use of time and space. Organizational innovations, such as team teaching, were based on the assumption that there needed to be basic changes in the ways schools were organized to deliver instruction. Team teaching could involve teachers at the same grade level or subject areas or different ones. What mattered is that it gave participants flexibility in the ways they delivered instruction.

The following table indicates the key elements of the efforts and the issue each was addressing. It is important to note that most of the examples used in this paper combined elements--either through practical experience or from theoretical perspectives, innovators found that the elements were connected. As a result, changes in the delivery of curriculum also frequently involved changes in organizing for instruction. (Indeed, to foreshadow a conclusion, the very fact of multiple changes created problems.)

Table 1

Elements of Restructured Schools

ELEMENT	ISSUE
Curriculum Delivery	Individual learning
Curriculum Content	Critical thinking; integrated learning
Team Teaching	Flexible delivery of instruction
Shared Decision Making	Commitment to Innovation

Curriculum delivery. The major issue that the change in the methods used to deliver curriculum to students was to address was individual student learning. The clearest example of the change in curriculum delivery was in the Individually Guided Education program. In that program, curriculum was presented to students as individuals--they moved through the basic skills portion at their own rate and there was grouping and regrouping of students. Changes in the delivery of curriculum also could involve the incorporation of non-text materials (audio-visual aids) and experiential learning opportunities.

Curriculum content. The content of the curriculum also was changed in many instances. Some of the changes came from the quest for "relevancy," others from concerns that students were unable to think critically. There was a related desire to ensure that students saw the relationship of one body of knowledge to another. On the elementary school level, for example, the period saw a revival (although also seen without its history!) of the project or unit method of teaching. On the secondary school level, there were numerous humanities courses that

integrated history and literature. Additional, more sweeping, attempts to integrate curriculum also existed.

Team teaching. Teachers were used to being isolated from one another. The egg-crate school was (and is) the norm. Isolation of teachers made it difficult to individualize instruction for students or integrate curriculum. Team teaching was designed to allow teachers flexibility in grouping students either by size of group or by individual learning needs. It also could bring together teachers of different subject matter or grade levels so that they could determine the best ways to deliver instruction to students.

Shared decision making. The impetus for shared decision making stemmed from three sources. The first (with roots in the political atmosphere of the day) was the view that those affected by a decision ought to be involved in making it. The second was some research on organizational change that indicated that people who were involved in change efforts were more likely to be supporters of them. Third, collaborative decision making was inherent in some of the innovations, such as team teaching.

It is easy to see how these innovations did not exist in isolation. There are common needs and assumptions among them. For example, if instruction is to be individualized, then teachers need to organize themselves so that they can deliver it flexibly--grouping and regrouping students as needed, having an opportunity to work one-on-one with some students. The obvious answer to the problem is to create teaching teams. Further, if teaching teams are to flourish, there is a need for teachers to share in making both instructional and organizational decisions. Similarly, if one judges that a major problem is that "knowledge" is artificially separated by disciplines or that learning takes place most effectively when the relationships among various areas of knowledge are drawn, then the need for integrated curriculum is clear. Team teaching is a logical delivery mechanism for multi-disciplinary, integrated curriculum, and teachers on those teams need to make key decisions about that delivery--and the argument follows as above.

The Findings

In many ways, the studies of the innovations carry a plaintive tone. The search is for "what went wrong"--why good ideas that seemed to respond to very real needs were not successful. The evaluators and researchers for the most part seemed to share the values and visions of the program developers and sought explanations out of the various research frameworks from which they worked for the failure. And, in fact, their findings influenced the design and implementation of later innovations. This section provides a summary of key findings from the studies of the "restructured schools" of the 1960s and 1970s.

Role-related issues: The problem of "role overload" was identified as an important reason for the problems at the Cambria school (Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein, 1979). At Cambria, teachers were not only involved in school-level decision making, but also in curriculum development and in changed instructional delivery. The combination, according to the researchers, created role stress as well as conflict. A similar problem arose at the Kensington School (Smith and Keith, 1971), compounded in that case by the ideology of student involvement in decision making and the broadening (from the teachers' point of view) of the goals of school to include increased emphasis on the affective domain. The role overload and role confusion ("isn't this the principal's job?" "isn't this the parents' job?") led to burnout, low morale, resistance--and in the end, the demise of the innovation.

Although not as explicit in the studies of the Rural Experimental Schools sites, many of them also created changes in the roles of teachers and administrators that led to problems in implementation (Deal and Nutt, 1979). In the rural schools program, administrators in particular added to their existing jobs the responsibility of dealing with the federal government--and a part of the federal government with which they were unfamiliar. For the most part, the role problems in the rural schools program meant that particular elements of the program were not implemented and that the planned alterations in the use of time and space, for example, tended not to occur.

The team teaching reforms also engendered role problems. The change from teaching in an isolated classroom to sharing instructional duties with others created a number of problems. First, teachers lost some independence. They were, for example, forced to plan and schedule in a very different way from before--on the elementary school level, the time devoted to reading could not expand and cut into the time allocated for math because the students (or the teachers) moved on; on the secondary level, if teaching the Declaration of Independence took two days instead of one, the integration might well get out of line! Second, teachers lost privacy and many felt threatened by the fact that others could view their work. Finally, the process of determining schedules and student deployment took more time than anyone had predicted--time that was in addition to the time for preparing for class and evaluating student work. The organizational decision-making role was added to the instructional decision-making role, which led to overload, low morale, etc. (Shaplin and Olds, 1964).

Ambiguity about the innovation: For many, the restructuring efforts of the earlier era were unclear. That is, the call was for a creating a "Fully Functioning Freddy" (Kensington) or involving teachers in curriculum development (Cambria) or for altering the use of time and space (Rural Experimental Schools). The meaning of these visions or goals was seldom spelled out. Indeed, the idea that the role of teachers should change and that they should become involved in organizational decision making implied that the vision should be worked out as the changes were implemented. But the teachers were never comfortable with the ambiguity--and the skills and time needed to develop the shared understandings and to negotiate differences were seldom built into the projects.

Of course, some of the restructuring efforts were fairly unambiguous. In particular, individually guided instruction and the multi-unit school were well delineated. However, in many instances the clarity of the innovation was not communicated to participating teachers with equal clarity. Further, even with the clear innovation, the organizational skills (and the time) needed for implementation were overlooked while the developers concentrated on the innovation itself.

Smith and Keith use the phrase "the alternative of grandeur" to describe the approach to implementing the vision for the Kensington school. In part, trying to do everything at once created an ambiguity around the various elements of the change effort. First, teachers asked (at least implicitly) what is most important? Second, they were unable to concentrate long enough on any given issue to resolve it--to come to mutual understanding and agreement about what to do.

Contextual problems: Reviewing the studies in the early 1990s allows the reader to feel extraordinarily smart. Each in its own way discovers the importance of the context--and the problems of fit between the change effort and the context--a fact that is fairly taken for granted now. In the Rural Experimental Schools project, the contextual issue is almost a cultural clash

between the bureaucrats in Washington and local rural school people. Clearly, there were different ways of viewing the world, different types of skills, and different emphases. One example of the differences is that fact that the Washington project monitors assumed that the rural school people could provide them with plans lin the manner that the government required, and the school people assumed that the open nature of the program left them with many choices. The missed communication is also clear around such issues as who was appointed project director--with the Federal people seemingly ignorant of the importance of schools as places of employment in rural areas.

The importance of the context to the ultimate failure of the Kensington school is well described by Smith, Dwyer, Prunty, and Kleine in *Innovation and Change in Schooling: History, Politics, and Agency* (1988). Changes in the nature of the community in which Kensington was located had a major impact on the way the school was organized and instruction was delivered. Even at its start, the location of Kensington in a conservative community led to many of the implementation problems experienced there.

Summary: The studies of the restructuring efforts tended to converge around three issues--problems that lay in the fuzziness of the innovations being promoted; changes in the roles that teachers, administrators, and sometimes students were expected to perform; and lack of fit between innovation and context. These issues are clearly ones that can be addressed, which is one of the reasons for this paper!

Historical and Contextual Similarities and Differences

If Santanya is correct, then we must use the knowledge gained from past efforts to restructure schools in our current work. But there is as great a danger of mis-applying the lessons as there is of not applying them. The differences in the social, economic, and intellectual roots of restructuring between then and now need to be accounted for in the application of learning. Highlighting a set of differences is fraught with difficulty. For example, an argument that "x" is true now can be countered with "it was also true then, but we just didn't know it." And there is truth in such a claim. In order to avoid that kind of discussion, the issues raised in this section focus on the way the context was and is <u>understood</u>--based on the view that it is people's understanding of situations that frame their actions.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of great social ferment. The nation had discovered poverty and inequality and viewed the schools as an important force in improving the polity. School innovation had begun to move from the post-Sputnik focus on the content of the curriculum and the intellectual demands of schools to a more Deweyan vision of the role of schools in a democratic society. Further, the fact that the curriculum development projects had tried to develop "teacher proof" materials created resentment within the education profession that led to the call to include teachers in decision making. Finally, there were some educational research findings about student learning, based primarily on behavioral psychology, that influenced innovation.

Current calls for restructuring share the desire to "empower" teachers, and, in fact, one impetus for empowerment is the view that the first wave of reform de-skilled and de-valued teachers as professionals. There is less cohesion in whether the focus of the school is purely intellectual. There is also more, and more complex and valuable, research about teaching, learning, and managing on which to base the restructuring efforts.

Some current efforts at restructuring start from concerns for the learning of those who seem least able to benefit from traditionally structured schools--poor people and people of color. But the equity issue is different from that of the 1960s and 1970s in two ways. First, it is cast in economic not political terms, and second, its focus is multi-ethnic not merely bi-racial. The very fact that the nation is once more the recipient of immigrants from many parts of the world is an important difference from the earlier era.

A difference in historical context also lies in the players in the restructuring arena. Earlier, the players were educators, including educational bureaucrats. Currently, restructuring is espoused not only by educators but by the business community and policy makers (not just educational policy makers). Some restructuring efforts also include providers of other social services so that day care centers and health clinics are housed in the school.

There is also much less optimism about what can be accomplished than in the earlier era. In part, the decreased rosiness of vision reflects increased understanding of the complexity of change and the problems in education. It also reflects the general national perspective that the glory days have ended and that the United States is no longer the most productive and wealthiest nation on earth. Although the term "restructuring" reflects the push toward deep and basic change in the way schools are organized and run and the way instruction is delivered, it is also the term used in business for post-bankruptcy changes.

Finally, there are changes in the way people think about the world. These changes range from the philosophical shifts from logical postivism to a more inclusive framework that acknowledges phenomenology or critical theory as viable epistemologies to undergird education to the more popular view of the change from an industrial to an information society. With varying degrees of rigor, there are many who believe that the paradigm has shifted and that schools must change in fundamental ways to meet that shift. It is because the world has changed so much--and so basically--they argue, that it is a horror that schools of today are much like schools of the beginning of the century.

Lessons to be Learned

There are three major lessons to be drawn from the past. First, participants in restructuring programs need to understand their roles in it and to have the skills to carry out those roles. Second, although programs based on shared decision making cannot lay out the details in advance, it is necessary to lay out how decisions will be made and to provide time for making them. Finally, it is necessary to attend equally to the content and goals of restructuring and the context in which the effort is occuring.

Roles: Principals, school board members, central office staff, and teachers will all change what they do professionally as a result of school restructuring. The changed structures reflect or lead to changes in roles and relationships. Such changes are never easy. The earlier efforts added to roles--teachers were responsible for teaching and for scheduling students. As a result, issues of work overload arose. Further, there are different skills required for each type of task and seldom was training time allocated for developing the missing skills. Finally, even with highly developed skills, coordination itself takes time. It is therefore necessary to build in sufficient training and planning time to any restructured schools.

Training for shared decision making must build on the fact that the decisions are made in a social setting. Unfortunately, most existing models for teaching decision making focus on

Training for shared decision making must build on the fact that the decisions are made in a social setting. Unfortunately, most existing models for teaching decision making focus on individuals, not groups. The difference is important--when an individual decides something, he or she needs to clarify the values involved (am I concerned most about efficiency or effectiveness? am I concerned most about utility or aesthetics?) In groups decision making, one person can be most concerned about efficiency and another about effectiveness--and still another not concerned about either. The problem facing the group is dealing with, negotiating, compromising, developing consensus or whatever when there are competing, legitimate values at stake. To do so requires understanding how to surface and resolve conflict within a work setting.

Research on change also indicates that change takes time and that success with change builds comfort and commitment. Phasing in elements of restructuring may be one way to start. Smith and Keith contrast the "alternative of grandeur" in the Kensington school with "gradualism." A gradualist way can exist with a grand vision--one realizes the vision step by step. However, gradualism, too has problems. For one thing, one person's gradualism is another speed and still another's "no progress."

Finally, role changes must be congruent with people's own vision of what they want to do. There are teachers who teach because they want to work with children, not adults. If, in fact, working with adults to make organizational decisions will be a requirement in schools of the future, then both preservice education and the messages for potential teachers need to change.

Ambiguity: There are two contributors to ambiguity about restructuring. First, there are many different models for restructuring, ranging from Sizer's Essential Schools to the National Education Association's Mastery in Learning project to the administration's espousal of "choice." Each proceeds from different assumptions and analyses of current educational problems. Such differences are not only inevitable but acceptable. The problem is that they all carry the same name, thereby creating confusion among many! Second, the end point of restructuring in almost any of its forms is not clear. If the program empowers teachers to make decisions within a site, one cannot start with a blueprint of what those decisions are.

Although some individuals are comfortable in ambiguous situations, most want some clarity or at least a sense of when clarity will come. In fact, in many of its forms, the process of restructuring itself is based on the assumption that the journey is as important as the destination and that people come to share understanding of what they are doing by doing together. Lessening the ambiguity inherent in such an approach requires that the learners of restructuring efforts, whether within a particular school or from outside, be clear about their own lack of clarity. In addition, there need to be obvious accomplishments along the road, points of interest and pride before the final arrival.

Context and Content: Tip O'Neill has convinced many that "all politics is local," and educational research has supported that notion in the field of innovation with concepts such as mutual adaptation and context-specific change. But even O'Neill used get out the vote efforts that involved focusing election day calling on those who were strong supporters. The politics might be local, but there are generalizable rules of campaigning that account for the fact that there are political consultants who move from state to state in elections. So it is with restructuring. Attention to the context (the local) is important to ensure that these particular educators are creating the best possible learning environment for these particular students. But each school does not need to develop curriculum or devise instructional techniques. There is a

content to the schooling process, and researchers and other practitioners have much to offer a local site, including the tools to analyzed the context and the effect the changes are having.

Conclusion

There are many reasons to restructure schools (and, although not the focus of this paper, some reasons not to). However, if school restructuring is to occur and benefit children, the lessons from the past need to be heeded. Issues related to school reform have been on the public agenda since 1980--as long a period as most can recall. The current call for restructuring holds a danger for educators--failure will push public attention to other public sector players as the key to national improvement. There are lessons to be drawn from earlier attempts to make fundamental changes in schools. History does not need to be repeated.

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